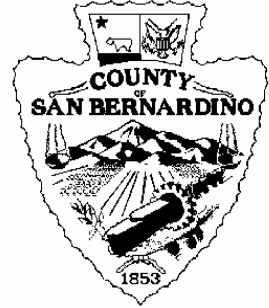


NEWS

From Supervisor Bill Postmus
First District, San Bernardino County



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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POSTMUS REACTS FAVORABLY TO RUNNER'S ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING DESERT PHOENIX HOME *- Supervisor Thanks Assemblywoman; Plans to Continue Preparing Lawsuit -*

SAN BERNARDINO – San Bernardino County Supervisor Bill Postmus, who represents most of the High Desert, reacted favorably to an announcement today by Assemblywoman Sharon Runner that the California Department of Developmental Services will not place four developmentally disabled sex offenders in a state-licensed group home in Phelan.

“Assemblywoman Runner deserves tremendous credit for protecting High Desert citizens by convincing the state to scrap plans to place four sex offenders in the proposed Desert Phoenix Home in Phelan,” Postmus said. “However, because the facility is still owned by an organization with a state permit to operate a group home, the County of San Bernardino will continue preparing to bring legal action against the state and the service provider until a final resolution is reached.”

Postmus added that a County lawsuit is still warranted to prevent other similar placements from being approved elsewhere in the County. The lawsuit authorized this morning at Supervisor Postmus' request will be filed within the next couple of weeks and will name the State Department of Developmental Services and Phoenix Programs, Inc.

“We believe the state authorized the use of this group home as a criminal detention facility,” Postmus said. “We don't believe state Health and Safety Code Licensing was intended by the Legislature to be used for such a facility.”

The Supervisor said that while small group homes for six or fewer clients are legally residential uses, they should not be used to house sex offenders or any violent individuals who are incompetent to stand criminal trial.

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POSTMUS REACTION

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"The community, and I as their representative, are outraged because of what these violent sex offenders have done and what they might have done in the future if they had been placed at the Phelan home," Postmus said. "As long as violent offenders or sex offenders could possibly be placed at any residential facility in our County, we will fight to keep them out."

The Supervisor said that criminal detention facilities are required to meet security standards that aren't being enforced in this case. They should at least have fences, exit alarms, and one-on-one supervision, he said.

Another issue taken up by the Board of Supervisors today was the County's plans to increase the amount of information on sex offenders that can be accessed through the Internet on the Sheriff's website as of tomorrow.

Postmus also called for legislation in Sacramento to protect communities from future similar proposals. "The bottom line is, cities and counties are routinely not properly notified when homes like this are proposed, and the Legislature needs to act to change that and to help the public protect themselves," Postmus said.

Assemblywoman Runner is working on a bill to increase restrictions on where such facilities can be located, he said. "One problem we have is the Legislature enacted a Health and Safety code provision that prevents Counties and Cities from requiring special permits, zoning variances and other approvals that normally otherwise would be required for residential facilities serving six or fewer clients."

Such local permitting provides an adequate amount of public input before approvals are given, Postmus added. "The state has taken that power away from us as local governments. My staff is looking into possible legislative remedies to complement our legal efforts."